



Overview of Community Engagement in Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP)

Overview

Prevention practitioners and community leaders share a common goal: protecting our communities and families from those who wish to commit violent acts, and helping those who might be radicalizing to violence to get the wrap-around support they need before a violent act is committed. Engaging members of your community—including peers, teachers, law enforcement, and community leaders—is critical for empowering bystanders—those who observe concerning behavior—to identify and prevent susceptible individuals from radicalizing and mobilizing to violence *before* it becomes a law enforcement matter. This guide provides practical information for conducting effective community engagement in this realm.

What is a Local Prevention Framework?

A locally-based prevention framework increases the ability of bystanders to identify and refer-for-intervention those who show indicators of radicalizing to violence. The approach brings together violence prevention, community policing, and threat assessment. It is then localized, engaging the broadest set of local stakeholders, to empower bystanders to recognize, react, and refer individuals to the appropriate community resources or authorities in a timely manner.

An effective prevention approach is based on the needs, challenges, and resources within each community, and leverages existing prevention and intervention resources. Key local stakeholders to engage can include those involved in training and building awareness, civic engagement and resilience programming, counternarrative campaigning, threat assessment and management programming, bystander training, and providing interventions. While communities know what is in their best interest and purview, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) can support the development of prevention frameworks by connecting federal field staff and regional partners with local officials, law enforcement, faith-based organizations, schools, and other community-based organizations to help understand *their* concerns, *their* resources, and *their* priorities. Achieving local prevention frameworks requires significant and continued stakeholder engagement at the state and local level to build transparent and trusted relationships among the whole of society. Such relationships reduce risk, enhance resilience, ensure information sharing, and fulfill requests for service. Building and sustaining these relationships is therefore a core goal of all prevention frameworks.

Key Terms

An **indicator** is a behavior that suggests an individual has likely already radicalized and may require more timely intervention.

Radicalization to violence is the process wherein an individual comes to believe, for a variety of reasons, that the threat or use of violence is necessary – or justified – to accomplish a goal.

Notable Examples from the FY16 Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Grant Program

Community-Led Resilience Building

The Nashville **Proactive Engagement to Achieve Community Empowerment** project increased community resiliency by creating a system that provided engagement opportunities and expanded protective resources in the community to youth. The program's youth engagement focused on building communication and conflict resolution skills, offering opportunities for civic engagement, promoting leadership, and facilitating mentorships by providing opportunities for civic education and community service.



Training for Members of the Public

The **Global Peace Foundation** in New Jersey developed a digital awareness training for a general community audience. The training provides information on ways the internet is used to mobilize and radicalize individuals to violence, as well as general cybersecurity information. Schools, law enforcement organizations, and public messaging campaigns can replicate digital literacy training programs.

For more information, please visit:

FY20 TVTP Grant Program: <https://www.dhs.gov/tvtpgrants>

FY16 CVE Grant Program: <https://www.dhs.gov/cvegrants>



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Aspects of Community Engagement



Implement a whole-of-society approach by involving leaders from all sectors, including:

- Non-governmental organizations (NGO) and nonprofit organizations
- Mental health, social service, and public health providers
- Academia
- Faith-based and community groups
- Tech sector and private businesses
- State, local, territorial, and tribal (SLTT) law enforcement agencies
- Regional federal partners



Work with non-governmental organizations to continue raising awareness of the current threat, to enhance intervention efforts, and to increase bystander reporting. Alongside general bystanders (peers, family members, friends, and colleagues), mental health and social service providers, and law enforcement, NGOs have great ability to engage with individuals on the brink of radicalizing to violence.

How can NGO partners be engaged?

- Incorporating TVTP education into school safety approaches
- Working closely with church youth groups to engage young people and their faith-based mentors to reinforce positive behaviors and raise awareness of recruitment tactics
- Collaborating with mental health practitioners for their support in TVTP efforts



Build trusting relationships to enhance transparency, communication, civil rights protections, and collaboration among federal partners and the community.

- HHS: <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>
- FBI and NCTC: <https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices>
- DHS/CISA: <https://www.cisa.gov/publication/cisa-regional-office-fact-sheets>
- DHS/USSS-NTAC: <https://www.secretservice.gov/contact/field-offices/>
- DHS/CRCL: Community Engagement Roundtables <https://www.dhs.gov/community-engagement>



Coordinate between community leaders, law enforcement, and federal partners to bring DHS training to your community:

- The Community Awareness Briefing—learn about violent extremist recruitment tactics, radicalization to violence, and prevention approaches
- Community Resilience Exercise—creating a localized action plan
- A briefing on Targeted Violence in Schools and identifying behavior indicators (USSS-NTAC)



Build upon existing prevention resources and programs to identify what is working and what can be improved. Create lasting and trusting relationships with community partners so that when someone *does* observe drastic changes in an individual’s behavior, they feel empowered to refer or report that individual to the correct authorities or community resources, regardless of their relationship to them.

How do other programs exist in the community?

- Assess the triage assessment for mental health services in your area and what happens when you refer an individual
- Review available law enforcement resources or trainings on violence prevention
- Get to know the community, school resource officers, and school safety networks
- Learn about intervention hotlines